Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

June 14, 2006

In reply refer to: DKR-7

Dear Interested Party:

On behalf of the Federal action agencies – Bonneville Power Administration, Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – I am pleased to provide the enclosed 2005 Progress Report covering actions to protect and recover Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act. The 2004 Biological Opinion for the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) specifies that the three Federal action agencies report annually on our progress.

The Federal action agencies are committed to actions that will achieve real biological results and improve conditions for these fish. We made substantial progress in this regard in 2005, including:

- Survival percentages for both Snake River and Upper Columbia River spring/summer Chinook and steelhead exceeded the average performance standard and improved over 2004 survival percentages.

- Adult salmon and steelhead survival is about 98 percent or higher at each dam.

- Continued testing on the juvenile passage systems at the dams, and the removable spillway weirs, or "fish slides," at Lower Granite and Ice Harbor dams are proving very effective. They delivered an estimated 97-99 percent survival for spring migrants, while spilling two to three times less water.

- The Bonneville Dam corner collector – another type of juvenile surface passage system – yielded a survival rate of nearly 100 percent for spring Chinook, steelhead and fall Chinook.

- Plans were completed for a "high flow" PIT detection capability (the device has since been installed) at the Bonneville Dam corner collector, where fish travel through in higher numbers and faster speeds. This will improve total detection of the juvenile fish as they pass through the dam.

- Caspian tern predation on juvenile salmonids in the Columbia River estuary has been reduced from 15 million in 1999 to about 3.6 million in 2005.

- A 25 percent increase in payments under the pikeminnow sport reward program led to the highest harvest rate of this juvenile salmon predator since the program began. An

estimated 2 to 4 million juvenile salmon per year survive because of the program to remove this predator.

- With our partners, we completed 42 voluntary water transactions around the region, each addressing a significant opportunity to restore instream flows in Columbia Basin tributary streams and rivers. In the third full year of operation, the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program delivered 530 cubic feet per second of water to Columbia Basin streams and improved flows on nearly 900 miles of streams.

- In 2005, we screened 19 barriers to restore access to over 180 miles of stream for fish. Overall since 2000, fish passage improvement efforts in the tributaries have resulted in fish regaining access to over 1,280 miles of stream.

- In the lower Columbia River estuary, we have acquired over 660 acres of fish habitat since 2000. In 2005, over 300 acres were being actively restored.

- Safety-net hatcheries continue to reduce the extinction risk of Snake River sockeye, spring/summer Chinook, fall Chinook and steelhead, and mid- and lower Columbia steelhead populations. In one such program, 348 Snake River sockeye adults returned to Redfish Lake since 1999 – a 20-fold increase over the total of 16 wild fish that returned from 1990 to 1998.

It will take many years to rebuild sustainable populations of some species. The actions we are taking are interrelated in a comprehensive, step by step approach. Taken together, they are producing solid and measurable successes and an important foundation for long-term recovery.

Every citizen in the Pacific Northwest has a stake in this work. If we are to be successful, we must work together to support our dual goals of a healthy environment and a strong economy. We remain committed to continued collaboration and coordination with other regional parties working toward these goals.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Wright
Administrator and Chief Executive Officer

Enclosure